

Performance Indicator Framework

Preamble

This framework has been developed to measure the impact of implementing recommendations made in the Gwenn Murray review. The expected impacts are directly linked to actions described in the implementation plan, which should be read in conjunction with this framework. The indicators are cross-referenced to the Action Plan.

The Performance Indicator Framework will monitor improvements in outcomes for children and young people in the CEO's care, their carers and caseworkers. The key questions to be answered by the framework are: "Are children in the CEO's care better off?" and "Are families and carers of children in the CEO's care better supported to reduce risk of abuse in the home?". The framework is therefore¹ linked to four key result areas:

1. Children in the CEO's care are safer
2. Children in the CEO's receive better quality care
3. Carers are better supported
4. Caseworkers are able to provide better quality support for children in the CEO's care and their carers

The framework provides a lens through which to observe the impact of Department's response to the Gwenn Murray Review. It is not intended to supplant other frameworks already in place to measure the broader performance of the Department and the reader should be cognisant of other research and evaluation activities currently underway, or planned, in relation to the children in care area. For example, the Department is engaged in an inter-agency data linkage project that will ultimately enable a better understanding of pathways into, through and beyond state care. Also, in conjunction with the Telethon Institute of Child Health Research, the Department is investigating the impact of its intensive early intervention program – Best Beginnings – in preventing recourse to statutory intervention.

The expectation is that the performance indicators will show an improvement compared to the situation prior to, or during, the Gwenn Murray Review. In some instances, a time-lag is expected before the reforms are fully implemented and before their outcomes are measurable. For other indicators, the sample will be small and may fluctuate to an extent that the effects will not be discernible in the short-term. These issues are described in the Expected Impact, Timeframe and Remarks sections of the framework.

Items in italics require further development

No.	Action Plan Ref.	Key result area	Indicator	Expected impact	Timeframe for measurable impact	Reporting schedule	Remarks
1.1	All; 6.1; 6.2; 6.3	Children in the CEO's care are safer.	Departmental PI – Rate of substantiated abuse in care by carers (the number of instances where an investigation into a Concern for a Childs Wellbeing results in a finding of abuse in the CEO's care by a carer per child in the CEO's care per year).	These rates are generally very low, so small changes may not be attributable to the review. However, in the longer-term a clear and sustained reduction in the overall rate should be observable.	2 - 3 years	Jan 2008; Jun 2008	2004/2005 figure is 0.51% (14 cases)
1.2	All; 6.1; 6.2; 6.3	Children in the CEO's care are safer.	National abuse in care indicator – As per 1 above, except including findings of abuse by others in the home.	The emphasis on safety planning in the review should reduce the level of abuse by others in the home. This should be measurable once the training in the Child Safety Assessment Framework (CSAF) is fully implemented.	Within 12 months of full implementation of CSAF training.	Jul 2007; Jun 2008	2004/2005 figure is 0.76% (19 cases)
1.3	All; 6.1; 6.2; 6.3	Children in the CEO's care are safer.	Duty of care indicator – As per 1 and 2 above, except including ALL findings of abuse of children and critical incidents whilst in the care of the CEO at the time of the abuse.	There should be a general reduction in matters notified to the Duty of Care Unit for children in the CEO's care relating to incidents occurring after 1 March 2006.	From 1 March 2006	Jan 2007; Jan 2008	2004/2005 figure for CMAs only is 1.4% (38 cases). Note the potential impact on Duty of Care notifications of recommendation 1.1. There may be an increase in matters reported by NGOs.

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No.	Action Plan Ref.	Key result area	Indicator	Expected impact	Timeframe for measurable impact	Reporting schedule	Remarks
1.4	2.1	<i>Children in the CEO's care are safer.</i>	<i>The extent to which particular age cohorts of children in the CEO's care are more or less vulnerable to abuse in care.</i>	<i>The risk of abuse for children in the age groups identified should be reduced.</i>	1 – 2 years	Jan 2007; Jan 08	<i>Need to identify trends/patterns in relation to the characteristics of children in the CEO's care who are subject to abuse in care.</i>
1.5	4.1; 13.1	<i>Children in the CEO's care are safer.</i>	<i>The extent to which safety plans are in place and are effective for children in the CEO's care who require such planning, as identified by qualitative review of a sample of cases (linked to Indicator 2.1).</i>	<i>It is expected that such plans will be in place where it is deemed necessary. Better safety planning will reduce the risk of abuse in care.</i>	From 1 March 2006	Jan 2008	<i>Two mutually exclusive case samples will be analysed: 1. around 40 – 50 abuse in care cases; 2. 50 – 100 children in CEO's care cases.</i>
1.6	4.1; 4.2	Children in the CEO's care are safer.	The extent to which children in the CEO's care who are placed with parents/guardians are at greater risk of abuse.	It is expected that children on orders who are placed with parents/guardians are at no higher risk of abuse than those in foster care.	From 1 March 2006	Jan 2007; Jan 2008	To use the data collected for the GM review as a baseline for the rates of abuse in the various types of care arrangements.
1.7	14.2	Children in the CEO's care are safer.	The proportion of quarterly reviews for children in the CEO's care completed by caseworkers (note that this is a proxy measure for visits by case-workers to children in care).	It is expected that there will be an increase in the rate of completion of reviews. The outcome will be better understanding and assessment of risks; therefore, ultimately, reduced abuse in care.	From 1 March 2006	Jan 2007; Jan 2008	The Departmental database (CCSS) does not currently record visits by caseworkers to children in the CEO's care.

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No.	Action Plan Ref.	Key result area	Indicator	Expected impact	Timeframe for measurable impact	Reporting schedule	Remarks
1.8	4.1; 13.1	<i>Children in care are safer.</i>	<i>The extent to which children in foster care are vulnerable to abuse by parents.</i>	<i>It is expected that there will be fewer cases of abuse in foster care by parents.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>Jan 2007; Jan 2008</i>	<i>This indicator requires development. May be necessary to use a proxy and verify by sampling case files.</i>
2.1	All; Issue 1	<i>Children in the CEO's care receive better quality care.</i>	<i>A qualitative analysis of a sample of abuse in care cases after completion of actions to ascertain the extent to which the recommendations have been fully implemented at field level. Case analysis is to include an analysis of the most recent carer assessment/review applicable to the case. Also to be included is an analysis of the extent to which the safety of other children in the same placement or in related circumstances has been taken into account.</i>	<i>It is expected that the specific improvements implemented as a result of the GM review will be identifiable at individual case level from care plans and case notes.</i>	<i>Once the recommendations have been fully implemented.</i>	<i>Jan 2008 (in conjunction with Indicator 1.5)</i>	<i>As this sort of analysis is resource intensive, its timing and sample selection method should be considered carefully. May include focus groups and interviews of key informants. May also look at frequency of visiting by case-workers if Indicator 1.7 not fully developed.</i>
2.2	17.1	Children in the CEO's care receive better quality care.	Feedback from the Advocate for Children in Care.	Once recommendations have been implemented, complaints made to the Advocate for Children in Care should not be in relation to issues addressed by actions in response to the GM review.	Once the recommendations have been fully implemented.	TBD	Need to cross-reference complains made to the Department via the Advocate for Children in Care with the GM Action Plan.

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No.	Action Plan Ref.	Key result area	Indicator	Expected impact	Timeframe for measurable impact	Reporting schedule	Remarks
2.3	8.3	<i>Children in the CEO's care receive better quality care.</i>	<i>Stability of placement.</i>	<i>It is expected that children will have fewer placements whilst in the CEO's care.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>Jul 2007; Jul 2008</i>	<i>Use existing State and National performance indicators.</i>
2.4	17.1; 17.2	<i>Children in the CEO's care receive better quality care.</i>	<i>The extent to which children in the CEO's care report receiving quality care.</i>	<i>It is expected that children will perceive some beneficial changes arising from implementation of GM recommendations.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>Jan 2008</i>	<i>Possibly in conjunction with CREATE or as a project auspiced under the Charter of Rights group.</i>
2.5	All	<i>Children in the CEO's care receive better quality care.</i>	<i>The extent to which the health, education and employment outcomes for children in the CEO's care improve.</i>	<i>In the mid to longer term, outcomes for children in the CEO's care should improve.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>TBD</i>	<i>Early indications may be discernable from the Assessment and Planning System (APS). Possible use of Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA) data.</i>
3.1	3.1	Carers are better supported.	Carer assessments and reviews completed on time.	It is expected that there will be an improvement in the proportion of these assessments/reviews that are completed on time from 1 March 2006. Therefore, carers at risk of committing abuse will be more likely to be identified early and supports put in place.	From 1 March 2006	Jul 2007; Jun 2008	This is also an indicator for the current budget submission around children in care.

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No.	Action Plan Ref.	Key result area	Indicator	Expected impact	Timeframe for measurable impact	Reporting schedule	Remarks
3.2	5.2; 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4	Carers are better supported.	Feedback from Foster carers, including non-government carers.	It is expected that feedback from foster carers relating to the extent to which they feel supported by the Department will improve.	Baseline data was collected in November 2005. Surveys are conducted annually in November.	Jan 2007; Jan 2008	Questions 6 and 7 of the annual customer perception survey. will be the most informative. Q6 is about the extent to which carers feel supported by workers and Q7 measures the extent to which the Department is working from a strengths and child focused perspective. Need to include non government carers in 2006.
3.3	2.1; 2.2; 7.3; 8.5; 8.6	<i>Carers are better supported.</i>	<i>The extent to which new carers are supported and all carers are better linked to resources and supports.</i>	<i>It is expected that Department will improve support arrangements for new and existing carers.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	Jan 2007; Jan 2008	<i>Extend customer survey to all carers in October 2006; Identify new carers in responses; Consider new survey for carers in 2007.</i>
3.4	2.1; 2.2; 7.3	<i>Carers are better supported.</i>	<i>Participation rates by carers in Department provided or funded training.</i>	<i>It is expected that non-mandatory training will be a focus of improved supports for carers arising from the implementation of GM recommendations.</i>	<i>Once the recommendations have been fully implemented.</i>	Jan 2008	<i>To be developed. Linked to Indicator 3.3; dependant upon a new survey for carers in 2007.</i>

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No.	Action Plan Ref.	Key result area	Indicator	Expected impact	Timeframe for measurable impact	Reporting schedule	Remarks
3.5	4.1; 4.2	<i>Carers (parents) are better supported.</i>	<i>Rate of substantiated abuse after leaving CEO's care.</i>	<i>It would be expected that this rate would be similar to that for children in the CEO's care.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>Jul 2007; Jun 2008</i>	<i>No comparative data prior to 1 March 2006. This indicator would only be measured for children under 18 years.</i>
3.6	1.1; 3.1; 4.1; 5.1	<i>Carers are better supported.</i>	<i>Re-substantiation rate for abuse in care.</i>	<i>It would be expected that there will be a reduction in the number of instances where a child in the CEO's care is abused more than once in care.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>Jul 2007; Jun 2008</i>	<i>Some variations of this indicator may also be informative; eg. rates of substantiation of abuse in care after prior abuse whilst not in care.</i>
4.1	4.2; 14.1	Caseworkers are able to provide better quality support.	Caseworker caseload.	It is anticipated that the ratio of caseworkers to cases of children in care will reduce to benchmark levels. Allowing for recruitment of new workers, the impact is likely to take six months to one year to fully implement, noting that there is currently no widely accepted definition of a case.	From September 2006.	Jan 2007; Jan 2008	Links to indicators for Children in Care budget submission. Target ratio is 1:15. Other ratios may also be included here; eg. psychologists and education officers. Need to confirm definitions and counting rules.

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No.	Action Plan Ref.	Key result area	Indicator	Expected impact	Timeframe for measurable impact	Reporting schedule	Remarks
4.2	<i>10.1; 11.1</i>	<i>Caseworkers are able to provide better quality support.</i>	<i>The extent to which care plan actions are implemented.</i>	<i>It is expected that caseworkers will be able to more effectively ensure that actions in care plans are carried out, in particular those that are related to child safety. The Department is investigating how best to monitor this indicator within existing quality assurance frameworks.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>Jan 2008</i>	<i>In conjunction with Indicator 1.5.</i>
4.3	14.1	Caseworkers are able to provide better quality support.	<i>The extent to which children in the CEO's care receive stable case management.</i>	<i>It is expected that there will be less turnover of case managers for children in the CEO's care.</i>	<i>From 1 March 2006</i>	<i>Jan 2008</i>	<i>Need to identify a reliable data source for the history of case managers. Refer to Assist for inclusion of history. Consider CREATE survey as potential data source.</i>

Notes:

1. The extent to which positive change is likely to be observable against the above indicators is directly related to the success in implementing the Action Plan. The implementation of the Action Plan should be closely monitored and any analysis of the above performance indicators carried out in conjunction with an assessment of the implementation.
2. There may be other factors acting upon the indicators above; eg. mandated requirements in the new legislation.
3. Trend analysis pre and post 1 March 2006 may be confounded by changes to case practice, data recording practice and database changes brought about by the new legislation. These changes will need to be factored into any analysis of data across the implementation period.
4. In time, other indicators of outcomes for children in care may be available, for example through data linkage or feedback from children. These are longer-term measures that are not currently available.